



Marine
Management
Organisation

Final note MPA National Steering Group (NSG)

Monday 19 October meeting 11:00 – 13:00
Room 213, Nobel, House, London

Attendees

Michael Coyle (MMO) – Chair, Louise Vall (Defra), Stephen Bolt (AIFCA), Jan MacLennan (Natural England), Roger Covey (Natural England), Ollie Payne (Joint Nature Conservation Committee), Mark Roberts (LGA Coastal SIG), Eve Leegwater (Environment Agency), Liz English (UK Major Ports Group), Rod Jones – by phone (MOD), Sarah Dacre (DECC), Evelyn Pizzolla (DECC) – by phone.

Apologies: Jane Burch (LGA), Andy Smith (Coastal SIG), Tracy Edwards (DECC), Inger Soderstrom (DECC), Godfrey Souter (Department for Transport), Jon Davies (JNCC)

Welcome and Introduction

1. MC welcomed attendees, and briefly explained how why the group was established, and its key role, for the benefit of recent attendees representing MOD and Ports sectors. It was explained that the meeting would follow similar formats in terms of agenda items designed to facilitate short knowledge exchange items, followed by lengthier discussions on more substantive issues.

Review of previous note of meeting (June 2015)

2. Most actions were brought forward to the agenda. With the exception of action 4 relating to the reminder note to authorities. This action is now closed. A revised note, incorporating more relevant authorities has been distributed to EMS officers and NSG members. It was agreed that effort should be made to circulate the note throughout our respective organisations.

Action 1: All to distribute NSG reminder note to authorities.

Progress with NSG workplan

Designated Sites System

3. JM provided an update on the expansion of the existing Natural England system used for SSSI reporting to incorporate marine sites. The on-line system will include information on threats, actions and existing management measures. There is also ability for authority access to update actions that have been assigned to them. The next steps are to agree the scope of information needed to be uploaded by trialling a site (Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC). Other key points include:
 - a. By January 2016 marine sites will be incorporated on the site, but no information will be uploaded regarding management.
 - b. New condition assessment methodology is being developed at the moment and will include recording condition threats - will take NE area teams a number of years to complete for all sites. Timelines and roll out not yet in place.
 - c. NSG was asked to consider whether there was any interim data that could be uploaded
 - d. NSG also discussed updating in the future – who, what and how often. All of this needs to be considered.

- e. IFCA's are also developing an information resource which shows how they are managing MPAs, which can be shared once completed.

Action 2: NE to consider running a webinar when there has been further progress on piloting Plymouth case study and DSS.

Action 3: SB to share IFCA information once completed.

Action 4: JM to produce one side as an update on DSS development and highlighting issues which need to be addressed, including opportunities NSG organisations to upload information

Offshore telecon

4. MC provided an update on the offshore telecon in August with MMO, DECC, and JNCC to discuss reporting requirements for management in offshore sites. The activities potentially affecting these sites is relatively fewer than inshore and there are a limited number of regulators. It was agreed that the existing site information centres (SICs) on JNCC website is the most appropriate place in which to make any improvements on reporting.
5. DECC raised the issue of MCZ assessment and were eager to be involved in developing guidance on stage 2 (assessing public benefits) being run by Defra. It was clear that other DECC representatives had been engaged, but those working on oil and gas issues should also be included.

Action 5: MC to share MMO guide on considering MCZs with DECC – and link to working group on stage 2 MCZ assessments.

Short updates

WWF Life Bid

6. NE and JNCC have been working on a WWF Life bid which was submitted in September and aims to help support effective MPA management (Lead is Jenny Oates). JM has circulated information on the draft bid previously and requested that NSG consider providing a letter of support. It was agreed that as parts of the bid aligned well with the aspirations of the NSG, a letter could be provided.

Action 6: JM to circulate a 2 page summary of the project bid with a view to getting a letter of support for the project from the NSG

Berwick and North Northumberland / Tees Study

7. A report was circulated to the NSG in August, which identified future options for local/regional MPA management models in Northumberland and Teesmouth. The project was commissioned by NE and came up with recommended proposals to expand the existing BNNC scheme to encompass other sites and to keep Tees separate. English partners were very supportive of the proposals, which has resulted in new authorities becoming involved. Scottish funders are concerned about diluting Scottish priorities if more English sites are included. The next step is to discuss further with authorities with a view to assessing options for new management scheme structures.

OSPAR MPA management effectiveness

8. OP updated the group that the MPA management effectiveness paper is with OSPAR, and the UK (JNCC) is working on more detailed information on how we should report on MPA management. The UK will need to report to OSPAR in October 2016.

EMS officer workshop

9. JM informed the group that the yearly workshop of the EMS officers will be held on 21 and 22nd October. The aim of this annual event is for the network to discuss relevant initiatives and share best practice. JM and MC will run a session discussing the NSG activities and exploring how EMS officers can best engage and review future networking opportunities.

Strategic Issue discussion: Recreation (and bait digging)

10. MC introduced the item by explaining that recreation is a key sector which needs careful consideration by the NSG. This is because a) most MPAs are exposed to pressures from recreational activities; b) the evidence and information associated with scale of activities and the degree of pressure/risk is not well understood; c) there are a number of organisations that could provide a management lead at a site level; and d) there are a series of management options. Based on these factors, the NSG could bring real added value to tackling recreational risks.
11. The group discussed the fact that the vast majority of recreational activities possibly cause minimal risk to MPAs, so it is important to identify those that do, and focus on how these could be addressed. The group agreed that any work conducted on recreation by NSG should be proportionate ie addressing real risks.
12. A recently agreed Defra specification is due to be tendered which will explore the impacts associated with recreational and commercial anchoring. Additionally, Natural England published a report in 2012 looking at best practice in managing a range of activities, including recreational. Natural England is also looking at coastal access and recreational bird disturbance.
13. Natural England and MMO are working together on (a strategy) how best to address recreational issues, which includes consideration of trigger levels of risk, which suggest that management is required, and how this is communicated.
14. Additionally, the Management of Fisheries in MPAs Project Board has recently signed off a paper reviewing the issue of bait digging (including recreational). The proposal is for a review to be carried out with management proposals to be identified in areas where this activity is assessed to be a risk, by the end of 2017. The NSG has been invited to take this work forward.
15. The NSG agreed that a logical start would be to list the unlicensed activities of most concern, and then develop (in consultation with others) a toolkit of management options.

Action 7: MMO/NE to share any progress with developing recreational strategies with NSG.

Action 8: MMO/NE to initiate work to define key recreation risks and potential management options for NSG consideration.

Action 9: MC to report back to Fisheries in MPA Project Board that NSG will consider a review of bait digging as part of work on recreation issues, but will seek more steer on how best the NSG could assist on this issue.

Management issues raised by NSG

16. NE highlighted that some management groups are looking for a strategic steer to come from the NSG regarding future requirements for management and reporting.

DONM: MMO will send out potential dates for January 2016.